

JANUARY - MARCH 2023

CALVARY IN TOUCH



FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

Jackeline Abbondandolo, Intake Coordinator
347-949-1266 | jabbondandolo@calvaryhospital.org



GREETINGS

Greetings. My name is Edgardo Lugo and I am the new Director of Bereavement at Calvary Hospital. I aspire to uphold Calvary's core principles of compassion, non-abandonment, dignity, and love and cultivate these values in our department.

The leaves have fallen off the trees. The colors of the flowers, which blanketed the parks in the cities and the lawns of the suburbs and rural counties, have disappeared. What is left in these winter months are dormant trees, bushes, and landscapes. The bareness of the winter landscape can make us feel barren inside also. There are some who talk about having seasonal depression, which can be a type of emotional barrenness.

For those who have experienced loss, the bleakness of the winter months can be especially difficult, as the time spent indoors with our memories can feel particularly raw. We went through the holidays missing our loved one, and now we have these dark cold months to sit with our memories. Some memories will be recalled with pleasure and joy, while others will be sad. These recollections and feelings are part of the life-long grieving process, like the cycle of the seasons of autumn, winter, spring, and summer.

**CALVARY
HOSPITAL**

Where Life Continues

Continued on Page 3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Greetings, continued by</i> Edgardo Lugo	3
<i>My Sister, Maryrose</i> by Martina Deignan	4
<i>Grief Reads: Recommended Books for All Ages</i>	5
Bronx Groups + Counselor Contact Information	6
Brooklyn Groups + Counselor Contact Information	7
Manhattan Groups + Counselor Contact Information	8
Individual Counseling / Tree of Life	9



GREETINGS, CONTINUED

The National Association of State Foresters has an interesting explanation of what happens to trees in the winter, a process that I think can say something to us about hope in the time of grief. Trees go dormant in the winter because there is little daylight, and they make changes on a cellular level to survive the cold. Trees have cells that transport water up and down from their roots to the top of their canopies. To keep the cells from freezing and dying in very cold temperatures, trees produce a protein that extracts water to freeze outside the cells, while the water remaining in the cells becomes a sugary thick liquid that we know as sap. Sap protects the cells in the trees through the winter months until the spring arrives, when the trees return to actively growing again.



The dormant trees, while visibly lifeless, are actually preserving energy and preparing to bloom again. In appearance, dormant trees can be a symbol of the sadness and loneliness of grief. The invisible and marveling changes in the cells of the trees that form the sap can be a symbol of hope in a time of grief and a sign that new life will emerge in a new season.

WRITTEN BY
Edgardo Lugo, MS, LCSW-R, RPT-S, CGP
Director of Bereavement Services

MY SISTER, MARYROSE

When my much loved, beautiful, and only sibling, Maryrose, was diagnosed with a rare and incurable form of cancer in October 2019, it never occurred to me that she wouldn't be able to overcome it. After all, my big sister was fearless, gutsy, adventurous, intrepid, and really, really funny. Nothing, not even a devastating diagnosis, could cause her to wither. She had a big heart and even bigger will to live and was smarter than anyone else I knew. I was confident she'd find a way out of this daunting challenge because Maryrose was a warrior, a fighter, who loved living. She also had an overabundance of hope — as did I.

As the time passed and after the many months of surgeries, radiation, chemo infusions, tests, treatments, and doctors' visits, I began to see her strength was waning, but she still had hope — and so did I.

It wasn't until another MRI revealed her cancer had spread to her bones that it became evident her disease was continuing its steady, slow, and deadly march through her body. She made the decision to stop all treatments and was admitted to Calvary Hospital where she died, and all that hope we were holding onto died with her. It was October 12, 2021. She was gone — for good — and I wept like never before. I gently held her hand and whispered softly that I loved her and I couldn't imagine my life without her. It was the most profound feeling of grief I've ever experienced.

In the following months, I've often felt alone and lost without Maryrose. I shared everything with her — the exciting and the not so exciting. She was my confidant, traveling companion, best friend, and the most consistent and longest relationship I've ever known. Her death left a huge void.

It really felt like my heart had been broken and the pain I was experiencing was overwhelming. I knew I needed to talk to someone who understood what I was going through so I reached out to Calvary who helped me to find Stephanie Insalaco, a grief counselor with the hospital.

Since I've been speaking with Stephanie, I have begun to understand certain things about grief. Even when you're in the depths of despair, grief is part of the human experience. It links us all. It can hit you at any time and when you least expect it. It opens the door to other feelings and, oddly, has enriched my life in unexpected ways. Grief has helped me to see the preciousness of all life.

It has made me realize how much I valued and still value Maryrose's influence on me, and how that influence has shaped me. It has made me feel grateful for all the wonderful times we shared and how fortunate I was to have known her. Expressing my grief has helped me to rekindle the hope that crumbled away when Maryrose died.

With the New Year comes the promise of renewal, healing — and, yes, hope. I am now beginning to think of grief as a gift. It has opened my eyes and given me a deeper understanding of life and the possibilities it offers. I know that whatever I do and wherever I go, I am blessed. I had the greatest sister anyone could ever wish for. And I have come to the realization that although she's no longer a physical presence, I feel that her spirit will always be with me, very much alive — and shining brightly within my heart.



WRITTEN BY
Martina Deignan

Individual Bereavement Counseling Member

GRIEF READS: RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR ALL AGES

We the counselors of the bereavement department have gotten the same question from many of our clients and group members:

"What are some good grief books I can read?"

We have compiled a list of some of our favorite books for adults, children, teens, and parents/guardians of grieving children. We hope you can find these helpful in navigating the very difficult waves of grief.

FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

One Wave at a Time
by Holly Thompson

A Terrible Thing Happened
by Margaret M Holmes

What Does That Mean? A Dictionary of Death, Dying and Grief Terms for Grieving Children and Those Who Love Them
by Harold Ivan Smith

Helping Teens Work Through Grief
by Mary Perschy

Will the Cat Eat My Eyeballs? And Other Questions About Dead Bodies
by Caitlyn Doughty

FOR ADULTS

Grief is a Journey
by Kenneth Doka

How to Go On Living When Someone You Know Dies
by Therese Rando

It's OK That You're Not OK
by Megan Devine

Black Widow: A Sad, Funny Journey Through Grief for People Who Normally Avoid Books with Words Like Journey in the Title
by Leslie Gray Street

Superhero Grief: The Transformative Power of Loss
by Jill A. Harrington, Robert A. Neimeyer, & Darcy L. Harris

FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OF GRIEVING CHILDREN

Alphabreaths: The ABCs of Mindful Breathing
by Christopher Willard

The Color Monster: A Pop-Up Book of Feelings
by Anna Llenas

FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OF GRIEVING TEENS

Grief Work for Teens: Healing from Loss
by Ester RA Leutenberg

How to Carry What Can't Be Fixed: A Journal for Grief
by Megan Devine



BRONX GROUPS

Precious Moments (6-9 year-olds)

Monday: Jacqueline 4:00PM - 5:30PM

Tweens (10-12 year-olds)

Tuesday: Jacqueline 5:00PM - 6:30PM

Thursday: Jacqueline 5:30PM - 7:00PM

Teens (13-17 year-olds)

Thursday: Jacqueline 4:00PM - 5:00PM

Death of a Child Bereavement Support: 2 Years and Beyond

2nd & 4th Thursday

Joanne 12:30PM - 2:00PM

Death of a Child

Monday: Joanne 5:30PM - 7:00PM

Adult Death of a Parent

Thursday: Joanne 5:30PM - 7:00PM

Death of a Sibling

Tuesday: Joanne 5:30PM - 7:00PM

Death of a Spouse/Partner

Tuesday: Joanne 1:00PM - 2:30PM

Death of a Spouse/Partner

Wednesday: Joanne 5:30PM - 7:00PM

Spanish Speaking Group

Wednesday: Yvette 1:00PM - 2:30PM

Men's Discussion Group

1st Thursday: Jackeline 12:30PM - 2:00PM

Supportive Connections:

Parents/Guardians of Bereaved Children

3rd Monday: Jacqueline 6:00PM - 7:30PM



CONTACT US

JACKELINE ABBONDANDOLO, LMHC

347-949-1266

jabbondandolo@calvaryhospital.org

JOANNE CASTELLANOS, MA, LMHC, FT

917-574-4941

jcastellanos@calvaryhospital.org

EDGARDO LUGO, MS, LCSW-R, RPT-S, CGP DIRECTOR OF BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

347-963-7001

elugo@calvaryhospital.org

JACQUELINE MARLOW, ATR-P

917-708-0133

jmarlow@calvaryhospital.org

YVETTE RAMIREZ, CHAPLAIN

347-880-6446

yramirez@calvaryhospital.org

BROOKLYN GROUPS

Teens (13-17 year-olds)

Wednesday: Jackeline 4:00PM - 5:00PM

Young Adult Group

Wednesday: Abby 6:00PM - 7:30PM

Death of a Spouse/Partner

Thursday: Abby 4:00PM - 5:30PM

Death of a Young Spouse/Partner

Thursday: Abby 6:00PM - 7:30PM

Adult Death of a Parent

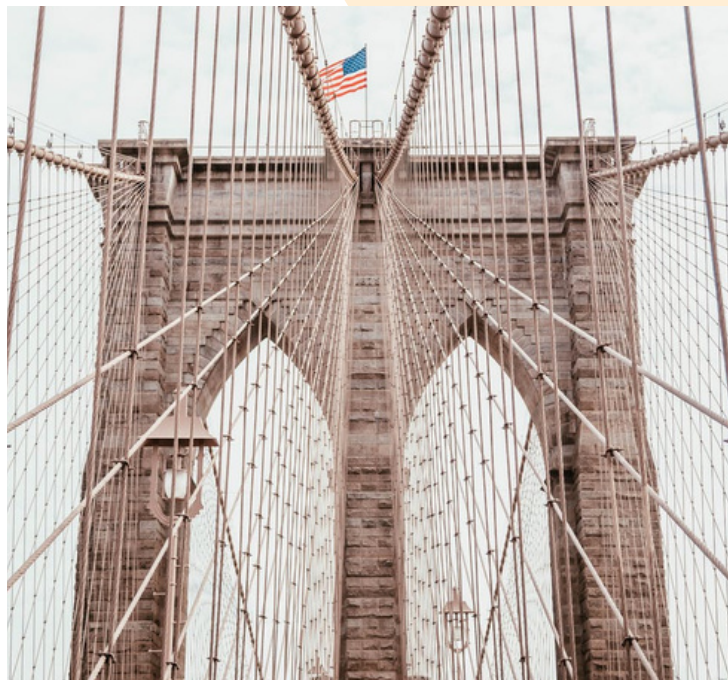
Tuesday: Jackeline 6:00PM - 7:30PM

Death of a Child

Tuesday: Abby 6:45PM - 8:15PM

Mindfulness & Movement for Grief

Wednesday: Jacqueline 6:00PM - 7:30PM



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JACKELINE ABBONDANDOLO, LMHC

347-949-1266

jabbondandolo@calvaryhospital.org

JACQUELINE MARLOW, ATR-P

917-708-0133

jmarlow@calvaryhospital.org

EDGARDO LUGO, MS, LCSW-R, RPT-S, CGP DIRECTOR OF BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

347-963-7001

elugo@calvaryhospital.org

R. ABBY SPILKA, MA, FT, LMHC

917-574-6879

aspilka@calvaryhospital.org



MANHATTAN GROUPS

Precious Moments (6-9 year-olds)

Wednesday: Stephanie 4:00PM - 5:00PM

Teens (13-17 year-olds)

Thursday: Stephanie 4:00PM - 5:30PM

Adult Death of a Parent

Wednesday: Jackeline 6:00PM - 7:30PM

Death of a Young Spouse/Partner

Tuesday: Stephanie 6:00PM - 7:30PM

Death of a Spouse/Partner

Monday: Stephanie 11:00AM - 12:30PM

Thursday: Stephanie 6:00PM - 7:30PM

Death of a Spouse/Partner to COVID19

Wednesday: Edgardo 6:00PM - 7:30PM

Death of a Parent to COVID19

Tuesday: Abby 5:00PM - 6:30PM



CONTACT US

JACKELINE ABBONDANDOLO, LMHC

347-949-1266

jabbondandolo@calvaryhospital.org

STEPHANIE INSALACO, MA, LMHC

646-771-6604

sinsalaco@calvaryhospital.org

EDGARDO LUGO, MS, LCSW-R, RPT-S, CGP DIRECTOR OF BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

347-963-7001

elugo@calvaryhospital.org

R. ABBY SPILKA, MA, FT, LMHC

917-574-6879

aspilka@calvaryhospital.org



INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

Calvary Hospital's Bereavement Department would like to acknowledge how challenging the past few years have been, especially when grieving. As a way to extend our support, we are now offering individual bereavement counseling for a nominal fee. If you would like more information, please contact Jackie.

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INTAKE COORDINATOR

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TREE OF LIFE



Calvary Hospital complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

Through the Tree of Life, we can recognize your significant naming gift in a permanent and meaningful manner. Your significant person's name will exist in perpetuity with the lifetime of the Hospital. This is a loving way of memorializing someone special to you or saying thank you, because your gift of love helps patients and families today and for many years to come.

For more information, please call 718-518-2689.

THANK YOU FOR READING!

Calvary In Touch has been made possible by a generous bequest from Michael Camara.